

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6124

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY

SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF EGYPTIAN DEMONSTRATIONS
AGAINST SADAT REGIME

REF: CAIRO 1270

1. SUMMARY: SYRIAN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE
TO ALLEGED DEMONSTRATIONS IN EGYPT AGAINST SADAT
REGIME, ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC CRISIS AND SINAI
ACCORD. END SUMMARY.

2. DAMASCUS PRESS AND RADIO JAN 31 HIGHLIGHTED
ALLEGED "POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS" AGAINST SADAT
REGIME WITHIN EGYPT. FIVE EGYPTIANS REPORTEDLY
KILLED BY POLICE AT AL-MANZILA, WHERE "STATE OF
WRATH BLAZING AGAINST FEROCITY OF EGYPTIAN REGIME
WHICH HAS (LET DOWN ITS GUARD) BEFORE ENEMY
WHILE IT FIRES ON UNARMED EGYPTIAN CIVILIANS." (REFTEL).

3. FEB. 1-2 PRESS DETAILED ALLEGED FLARE-UP
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OF STUDENT PROTEST AGAINST UNSOLVED EGYPTIAN

PROBLEMS AND SINAI AGREEMENT. AL-BAATH REPORTED "MASSES DEMANDING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, CONTROL OVER FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY, AND ACCOUNTING FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC CRISIS, PROFITEERING AND CORRUPTION." CAIRO UNIV. REPORTEDLY WITNESSED STUDENT MEETINGS WHICH RESULTED IN DEMANDS FOR INTERNAL REFORMS AND CRITICIZED "SINAI AGREEMENT AND DEFEATIST LINE OF EGYPTIAN REGIME," AND REQUESTED END TO PRESENCE OF "CIA ELEMENTS" AT SINAI OBSERVATION POSTS. MAMDUH SALIM AND SAYYID MAREI ATTACKED BY NAME. STRIKE LAUNCHED JAN 20 AT FACULTY OF ECONOMY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE IN WHICH PROFESSORS PARTICIPATED; ALL OTHER FACULTIES JOINED IN, AND STRIKE WILL PROBABLY SPREAD FURTHER, ACCORDING TO AL-BAATH. AYN SHAMS UNIV. SCENE OF PROTESTS AGAINST SADAT. INTELLECTUALS HAVE JOINED IN CIRITICISM OF SINAI ACCORD, EGYPTIAN DIVERGENCE FROM "PROGRESSIVE ARAB LINE," AND OBSTRUCTION OF EFFORTS TO END LEBANESE FIGHTING.

4. AL-BAATH COLUMNIST DREW PARALLEL BETWEEN PRESENT EGYPTIAN AND CHILEAN REGIMES AND CONCLUDED THAT SADAT TRYING TO DISMANTLE SOCIALIST STRIDES TAKEN UNDER NASSER BUT THAT EGYPTIAN MASSES AWARE OF REGIME'S COLLABORATION WITH "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" AND WILL NOT PERMIT REGIME TO UNDERMINE GAINS OF JULY REVOLUTION. ANOTHER COLUMNIST CALLED UPON REGIME TO "RECONSIDER IMMEDIATELY BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE SINAI AGREEMENT, THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF ALL PRESENT PROBLEMS IN REGION."

5. COMMENT: RESURGENCE OF SYRIAN ATTENTION ON SINAI ACCORD STRONG INDICATION THAT SARG STILL BELIEVES ISSUE PROVIDES USEFUL STICK WITH WHICH TO BEAT GOE IN INTER-ARAB JOUSTING. SYRIAN MEDIA HAVE ALSO TAKEN TO CALLING GOE "THE EGYPTIAN REGIME" (AN-NIZAAM AL-MASRI) WHICH IN ARABIC HAS PEJORATIVE CONNOTATION. ALLEGED DEMONSTRATIONS AS SYRIANS DESCRIBE THEM, PORTRAY EMBATTLED SADAT REGIME INCREASINGLY ISOLATED FROM EGYPTIANMASSES AND INTELLECTUALS AND SUSCEPTIBLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO CHARGES OF INABILITY TO COPE WITH ECONOMIC PRESSURES. IMPLICATION, OF COURSE, IS THAT SYRIAN "SUCSESSES" ON ECONOMIC FRONT, IN SECURITY COUNCIL AND INTER-ARAB POLITICS -- LEBANON MEDIATION -- PROVIDE FAVORABLE CONTRAST WITH DEPICTED EGYPTIAN "FAILURES."
MURPHY

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